

“And how, O bhikkhus, does a bhikkhu live contemplating feeling in feelings?”

“Here, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu when experiencing a pleasant feeling, understands: ‘I experience a pleasant (worldly and spiritual) feeling’; when experiencing a painful (worldly and spiritual) feeling, he understands: ‘I experience a painful feeling’; when experiencing a neither-pleasant-nor-painful (worldly and spiritual) feeling, he understands: ‘I experience a neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling!’”

“Thus he lives contemplating feeling in feelings internally, or he lives contemplating feeling in feelings externally, or he lives contemplating feeling in feelings internally and externally. He abides contemplating in feelings its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in feelings its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in feelings both its arising and vanishing factors. Or mindfulness that ‘Feeling exists’ is simply established in him to the extent necessary just for knowledge and remembrance, and he lives independent and clings to nothing in the world.

“Thus, indeed, O bhikkhus, a bhikkhu lives contemplating feeling in feelings. (MN10)”

The contemplation of feeling is very important. When one is not mindful of feelings, they will inevitably condition craving and identity view.

Feeling is a mental factor. Its characteristic is “to be felt.” Its function is experiencing the “flavor”— whether desirable or undesirable—of the object: each form, sound, odor, taste, tangible and mental object will have its particular “flavor.” Pleasant feeling experiences the desirable aspect of the object, and thrills both mind and body. Unpleasant feeling experiences the undesirable aspect of the object and makes both mind and body wither. Neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling experiences those objects that are neither pleasant nor unpleasant, and causes indifference of mind and body. There is no “I,” no person who feels. Rather, feeling itself “feels.”

With mindfulness established, when pleasant feeling arises, one becomes aware of its presence and, by understanding its individual essence, does not grasp that feeling as “myself.” One further contemplates feeling as a formed, conditioned, and dependently arisen state. Feelings arise dependent on the six contacts of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind with its six respective objects.

When one looks upon the arising feeling dispassionately, one can see the feeling as fleeting, impermanent, suffering (owing to its change), and empty of self. With such understanding, feelings lose their power to activate the underlying tendency of craving and identity view.